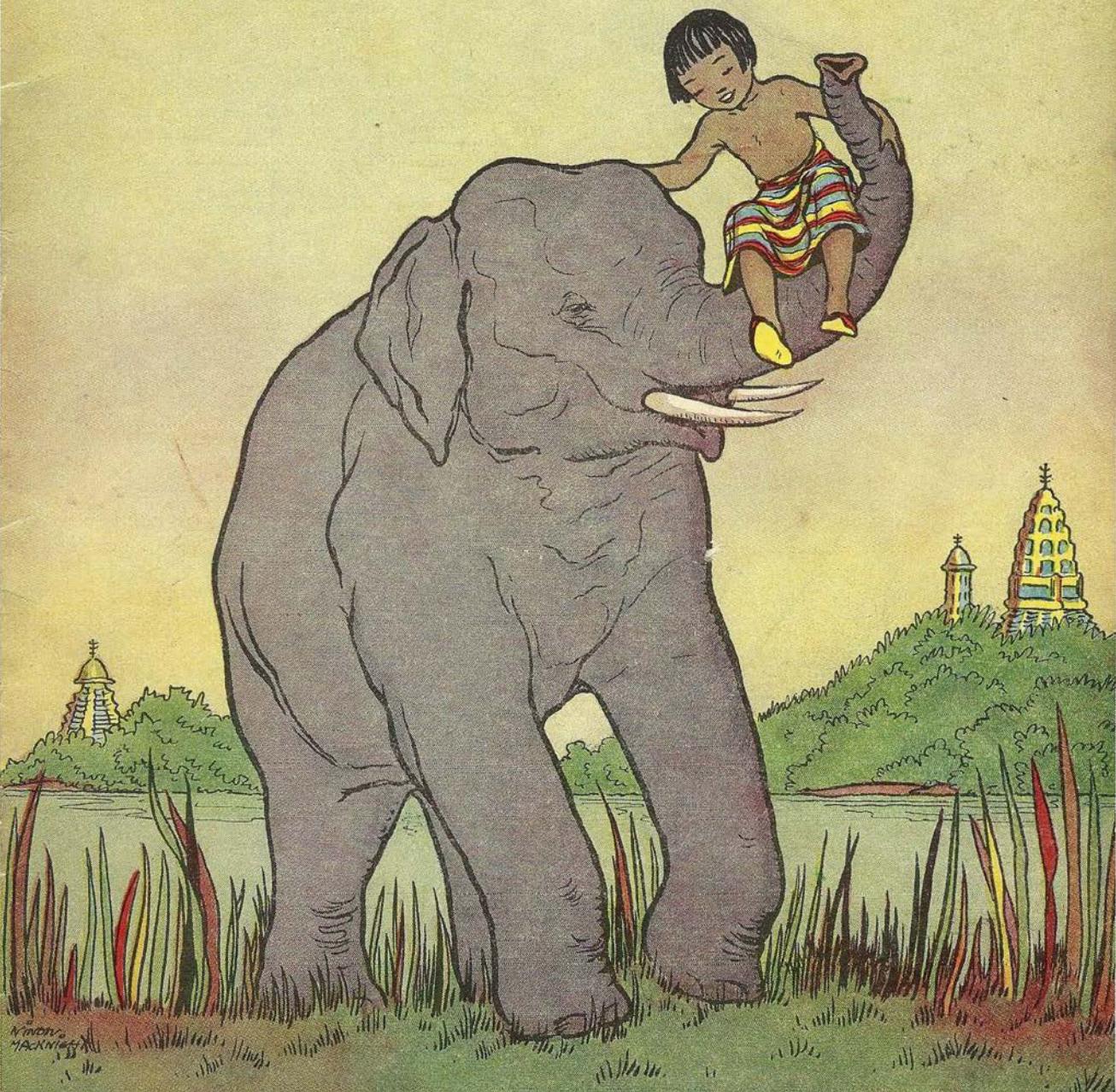
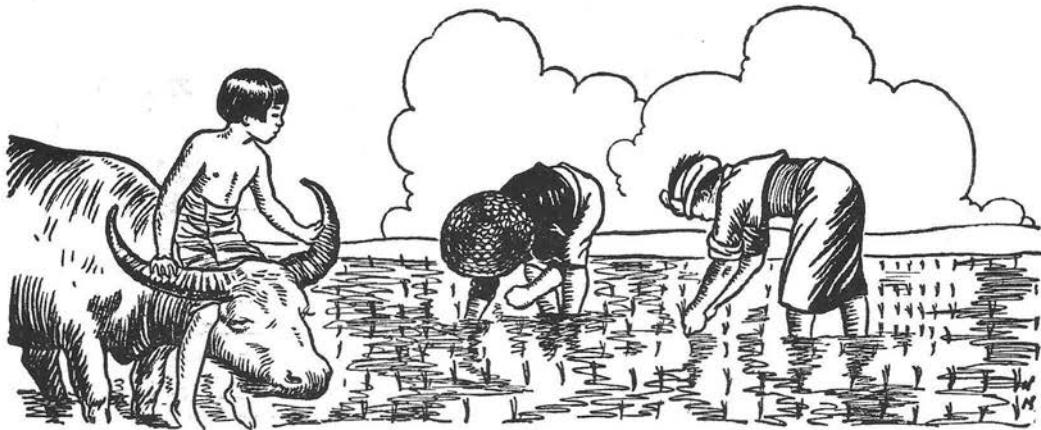


CHULA Of Siam



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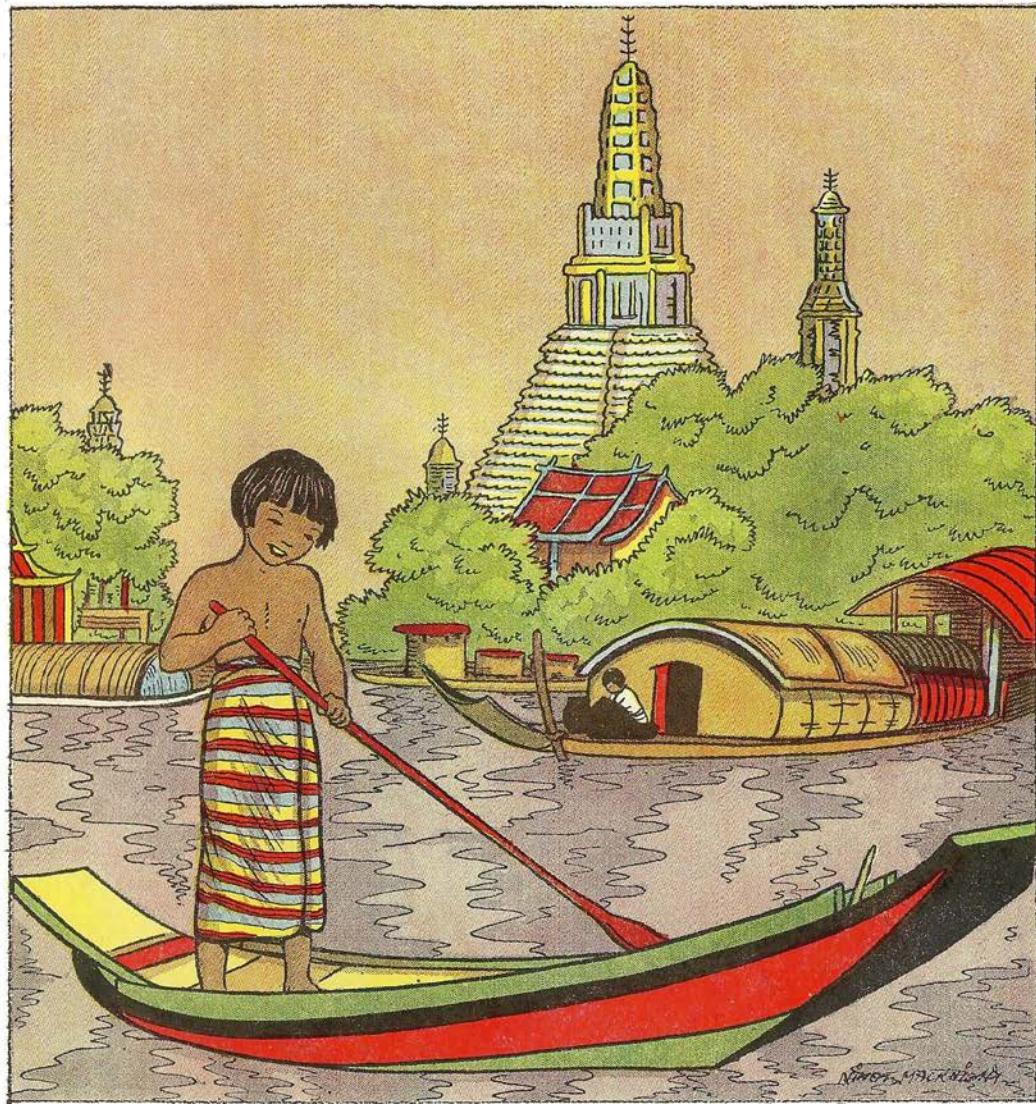


CHULA OF SIAM

Chula is a little boy who lives in Siam. Siam is a country in Asia. Sometimes it is called the Land of the White Elephant. Chula likes his country's flag better than any other flag in the whole world. It has single stripes of red, white and blue with a white elephant in a red circle in the center.

There are many elephants in Siam. There are dark gray ones and light gray ones. The dark gray elephants work in the forests. The light gray ones are called sacred white elephants. They are given to the king and are royally treated in a palace of their own.

There are also many little boys in Siam. Some of them drive big water buffalo when the rice fields are plowed. Then they wade in water, as they put the rice plants into the muddy ground. When the rice is ripe they take it to the city in boats. Rice is the most important crop grown in Siam.



Other boys and girls live in houseboats on the river. When they want to buy something, they go in their teak-wood canoes to a store floating on water. As they go up and down the river they pass many beautiful temples. If a



canoe tips over they don't mind. They learn to swim as soon as they learn to walk.

Some boys live near great forests of teak trees. That is where Chula lives. Every year there are heavy rains and floods. Chula's house is on stilts made of teakwood. Teakwood has so much oil in it, that it does not rot in water. The stilts keep the house high and dry. The roof is made of palm leaves. In dry weather Chula's father keeps his animals under the house.

"Wake up," said Chula's father one bright morning. "We are going into the forest to cut timber."

Chula got up from his mat on the floor. The air was very hot. All he put on was his panung. A panung is a strip of colored cloth. Siamese boys and men tie panungs around their waists, instead of wearing trousers.

In a few minutes Chula and his father and two other men were on their way to the forest. When they came to a tall,



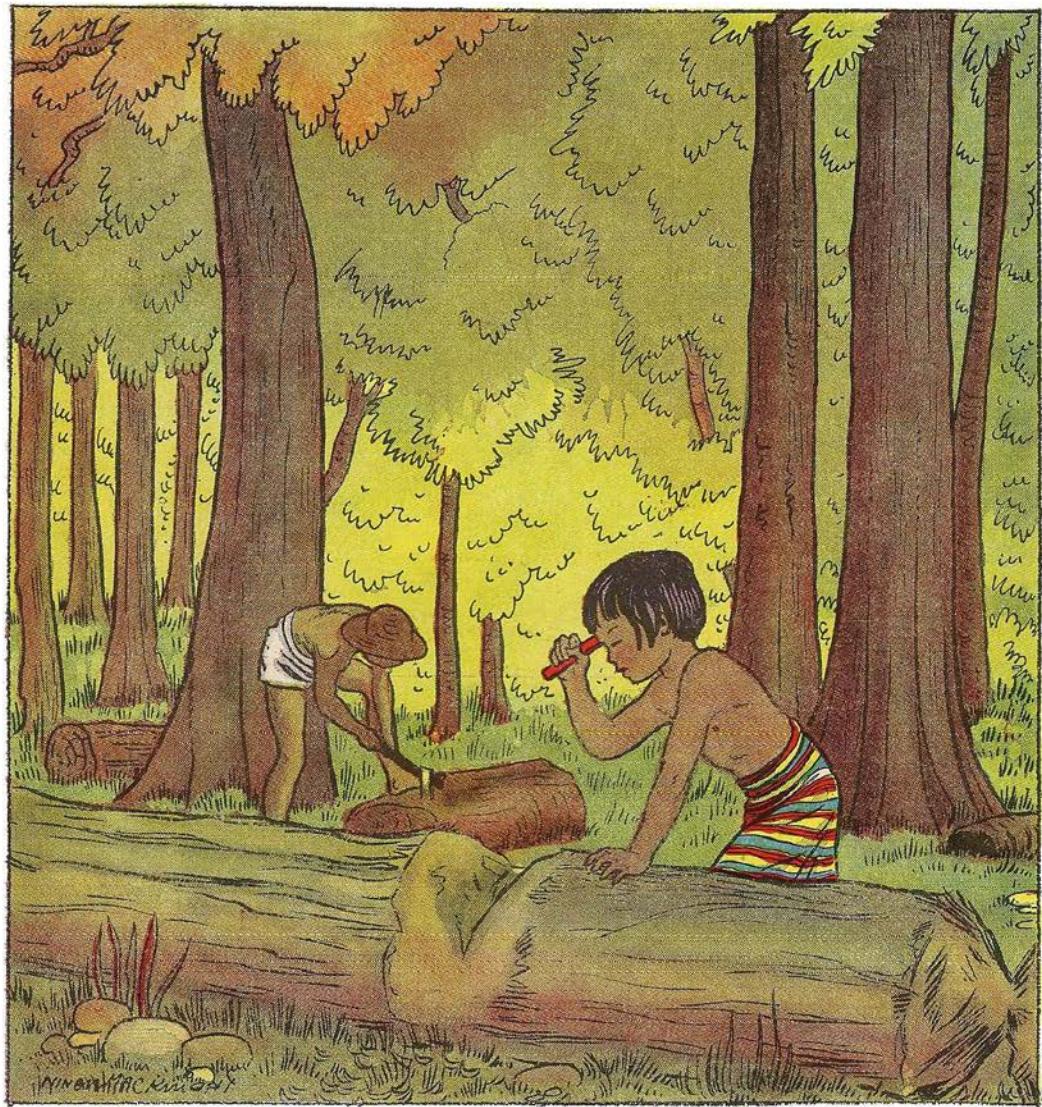
straight tree on a low hill, Chula's father stopped to look at it. Its leaves were dead.

"What is that ring around the trunk of the tree?" asked Chula.

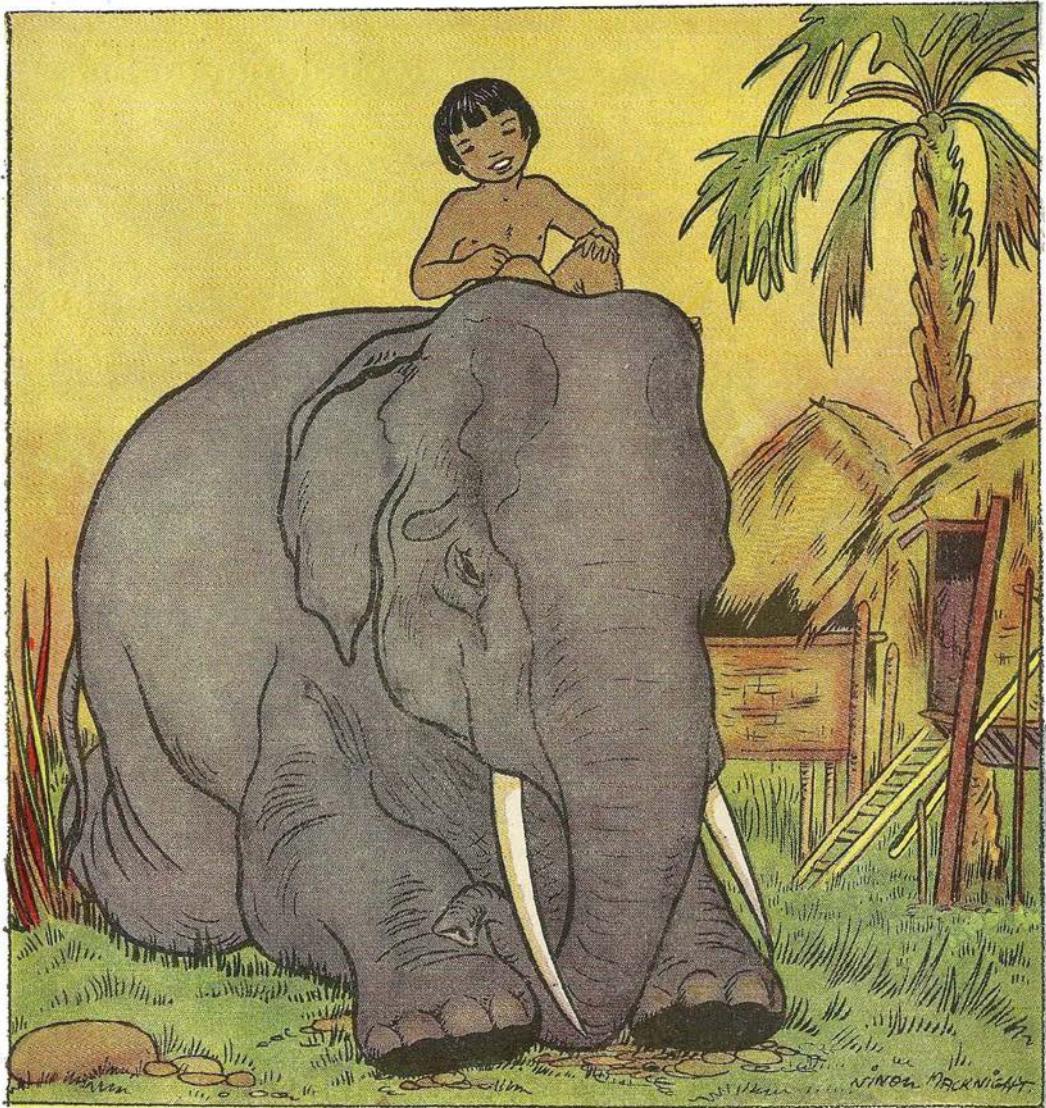
"That is the girdle," said his father. "I cut the bark to make the tree die slowly. After it is dead it is light enough to float on water."

One man started to chop on one side of the tree, the other man chopped on the other side. The notches they made got bigger and bigger. At length the top of the tree moved a little. The men ran quickly. Then "crash" the big tree fell on the soft ground.

"Now, Chula," said his father, "help us chop the tree into logs."

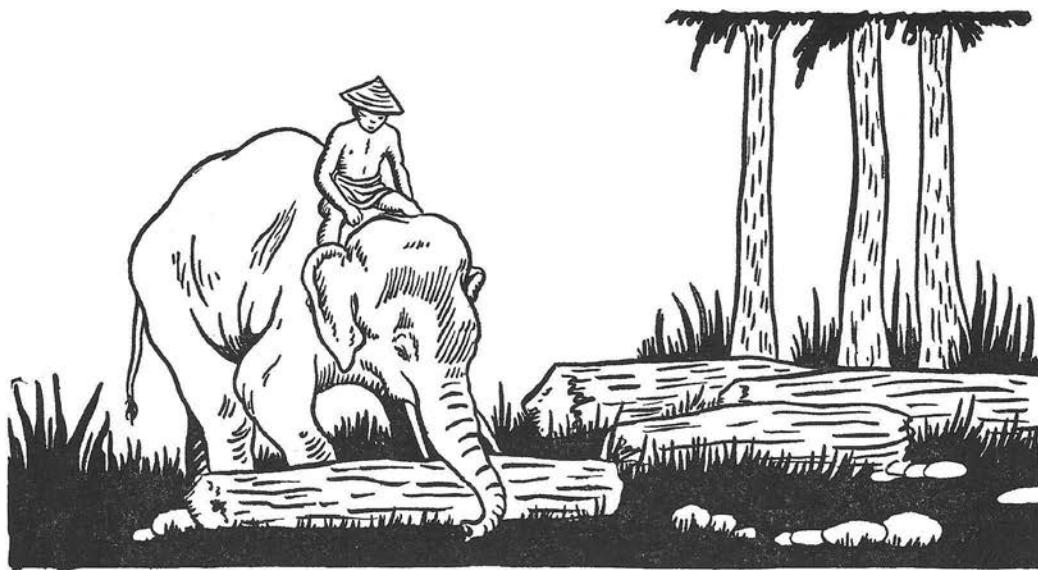


The sun was very hot. As Chula chopped and chopped he got so hot, that water dripped from his straight black hair. It ran down his brown face and neck, to his brown chest and back. All day he helped to make logs.



The next morning Chula was glad when his father said, "Today we will take the elephants with us to the forest."

In a few minutes Chula sat on the back of his favorite elephant. Chula had named his elephant Bumpo, because he



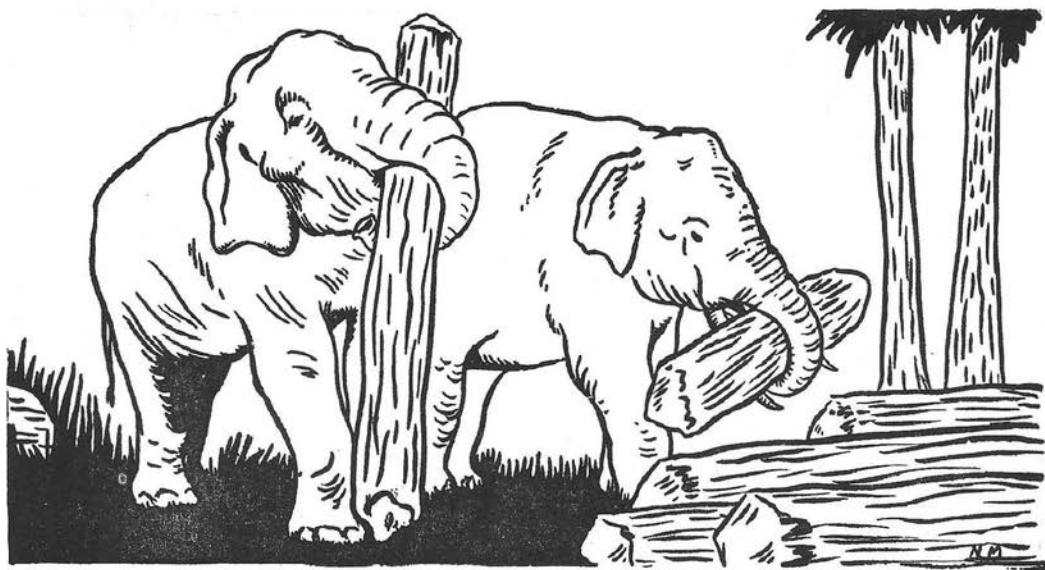
bumped logs into place with his ivory tusks and sometimes even with his head.

"I like you better than any other elephant in the whole world," whispered Chula, as Bumpo's big feet went crashing, crashing over the underbrush of the forest.

"Siam has more teak forests than any other country in the world," said Chula's father as he rode on his elephant. Chula said nothing. He was thinking how lucky he was to live near a teak forest in Siam.

"You start on the logs at that end," said Chula's father, when they came to the freshly cut logs on the ground. "And if Bumpo does not work, prod him with your stick."

But Bumpo knew what to do. He had been working in the teak forest for many years. With a chain Chula fastened a log to Bumpo's harness. The elephant dragged the log slowly for three miles, to the river bank. Then back



he went for another log. He used his trunk and his tusks to put the logs in a neat pile.

Back and forth, back and forth went the elephants, dragging logs to the banks of the river. Soon the logs would be floated down the river to the sawmill.

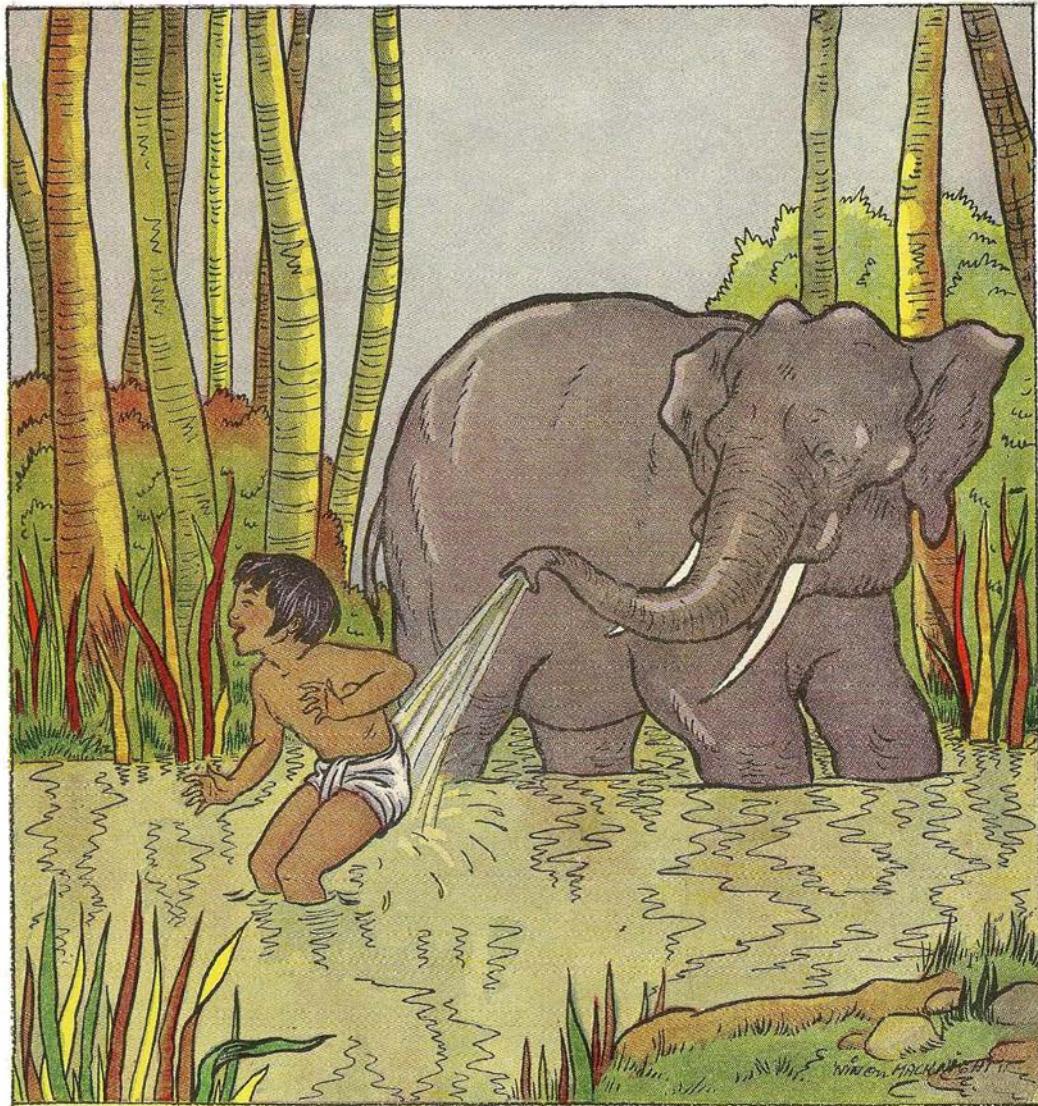
"I like to do this," said Chula to his father.

"Yes," said his father, "today the elephants are doing the hard work. But you must learn to like hard work too."

Finally Chula's father said: "Elephants are not as strong as they look. They should not work more than four hours a day." So Chula and Bumpo stopped working. Bumpo ate banana leaves and bamboo sprouts. Chula ate mangosteens, a fruit which grows in Siam.

Chula said: "Bumpo you are hot and tired. How would you like to have a bath in the river?"

Bumpo nodded his head and looked pleased. He went



splashing into the water. First his feet were wet; then his ankles; then his knees. He filled his trunk with water and squirted it all over Chula. Chula liked the nice, cool shower. Then Bumpo lay down in the river. Chula started

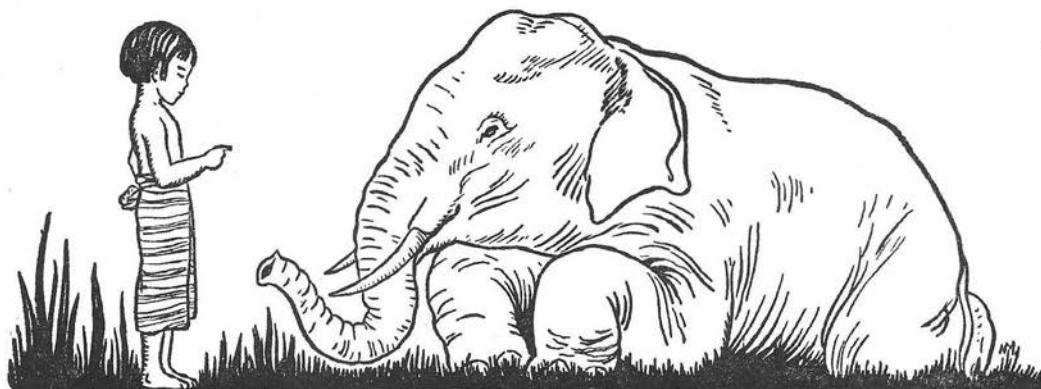
to scrub him with a brush of twigs. He scrubbed and scrubbed, until he had one side of Bumpo all clean, except his great big ear.

Just as he was trying to get to the ear Bumpo sneezed, "Kerchoo!" He sneezed so hard that he shook all over, and Chula slipped off his side "ker-splash" right into the water. As fast as he could, Bumpo stood up in the water and held out his trunk toward Chula. Then he lifted Chula out of the water and put him on his back. He walked slowly out of the river," "splash, splash, splash, splash."

On the way home Chula said, "Bumpo, you are a kind friend. I would rather have you, than the finest white elephant of the king's herd. You deserve a palace and robes of silk and jewels on your back."

Bumpo shook his head. He was thinking that he would rather work in the forest with Chula, than live in the finest palace in Siam.

ELIZABETH F. McCRADY





CHULA OF SIAM

Chula rides upon the trunk
Of this big elephant.
If we could only do it
We'd think it quite a stunt.

Little boys of far Siam
Wear bright striped panungs gay,
They don't have our many clothes
To put on every day.

K.C.G.